



May 23, 2007

Bi-weekly Newsletter

## >> **USAID Legacy Trains World Bank about EU Funds And Increases Capacity of English Teachers**

The Bulgarian Center for Development and Training (BCDT) is the legacy of the USAID Participant Training Program, implemented in Bulgaria by World Learning since 1993.



During May and June, BCDT is working on a World Bank Bulgaria (WB) project with the AUBG Center for European Programs to help the WB become better prepared to support Bulgaria in the early EU post-accession period. The project includes a local seminar series and study tour to Poland to increase the knowledge and awareness of WB personnel regarding EU funding, fund management practices and related challenges. The project also includes a conference for WB and Bulgarian government personnel on approaches to assessing the impact of government policy, with a primary focus on the impact of social inclusion policy.

Separately, BCDT will offer the School for International Training certificate course for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. The first course, with PTP in June/July, will prepare 20 Bulgarians to teach English to civil servants around the country in places with unmet English teaching needs. Applications are being accepted for the second course as well, which will take place in July/August for up to 12 trainees. A third course is planned for the fall for up to 20 Roma who will go on to teach English in their communities; this initiative will be funded by grants from the Democracy Commission and the Bulgaria America Society.❖

## >> **Days of Tolerance Mark Conclusion of USAID Interethnic Interaction Program**

Celebration of tolerance took place in the municipalities of Aytos, Devin, Ispirih, Kardjali, Momchilgrad, and Razgrad as part of the series of graduating events under the USAID-funded Interethnic Interaction program implemented by Partners Bulgaria Foundation. The Tolerance days' calendar included events such as exhibitions of children's art, a photo exhibition, literary readings, and sports events.

All the events promoted various achievements of the USAID-funded Interethnic Interaction program in the six participating municipalities. Over the last three years, a variety of local initiatives marked new pathways to better understanding and effective partnership among representatives of all ethnic and religious groups. These local initiatives aimed to address urgent local issues and foster inclusive models in the areas of education, social service provision, and entrepreneurship development.

Conferences on *Interethnic Interaction in Our Community* took place in each location with more than 300 participants. The lessons learned from the program implementation were disseminated at the conferences through presentations, performances, and brochures.

The prize for "Most Tolerant Person for 2006" was bestowed to the following individuals: Mr. Adil Reshidov, Mayor of Ispirih; Mr. Hassan Azis – Mayor of Kardjali; and Mr. Vladimir Zaimov – Director of the Regional Health Insurance Fund in Razgrad.

The closing nationwide conference of the Interethnic Interaction program will take place in Sofia on June 14-15, 2007.❖



*Mission Director Michael Fritz, and Gene Gibson, Democracy Officer, meet with Zdravko Lohovski, a local entrepreneur from the village of Trigrad who was awarded a small grant from the USAID Interethnic Interaction Program for expansion of his herb processing workshop.*



## >> Juniors in Action Event Recognizes Youngest Entrepreneurs

For the second year in a row, the “Juniors in Action” national competition was held to encourage the ideas and achievements of the youngest entrepreneurs aged 6-12 participating in Junior Achievement Bulgaria programs. This year's event was held May 4 under the patronage of Sofia Municipality and Sofia Mayor, Boyko Borisov. More than 150 students from all over the country demonstrated their knowledge in business and economy which they gained from JAB's programs during the school year.

“Our city” was the motto of the competition, officially opened by Mayor Borisov. Mayor Borisov assigned tasks to the youngest group of students, who had to develop different plans and ideas to make our city a cleaner, safer and more beautiful place to live. Sasha Bezuhanova, Chairperson of Junior Achievement Bulgaria Board of Directors and General Manager for Hewlett-Packard Bulgaria, assigned the older students to act like real entrepreneurs who create and develop new businesses in the city area.



*Juniors in action - brainstorming on how to make their city a more beautiful place to live.*

The students presented their projects and business plans to the jury and the public. All participants received certificates and a present from Junior Achievement Bulgaria – saplings to plant in their schoolyards. The young entrepreneurs made paintings illustrating their ideas for the improvement of the city and for starting their own businesses. The paintings will be exhibited at the mobile gallery “Our City”, which will make a tour around the country. The exhibition schedule will be posted at [www.jabulgaria.org](http://www.jabulgaria.org).

The event was supported by Red Devil, KFC, USAID, Microsoft Bulgaria and Praktiker.❖



## >> First Career Development Center At Professional School Opens In Gorna Oriahovica

The first career development center for secondary school students was established at the professional school of electronics M.V.Lomonosov in Gorna Oriahovica. The establishment of the center was possible because of the initiatives that the USAID Labor Market Project started last year for training career counselors for secondary schools.

The Business Foundation for Education continues to work to promote and establish the career counseling profession in education. The Business Foundation for Education and the National Pedagogical Center will continue training and certifying career counselors from secondary schools during 2007 and 800 new advisors are expected to be trained. The project was approved by the Ministry of Education at the end of April.❖



## >> *USAID Contributes to Better Investor Relations in Bulgaria*

On May 10 the Partners for Financial Stability (PFS) Program, in cooperation with the Bulgarian Stock Exchange and USAID/Bulgaria, organized a Regional Workshop on Investor Relations. This is the twelfth investor relations seminar organized by the PFS program and the first of its kind in Bulgaria. The workshop provided a chance to look at new opportunities and increased competition in the financial markets as a result of Bulgaria's EU accession.

During the workshop, participants from Croatia, Lithuania, Germany and Poland, as well as Bulgaria, presented different aspects of investor relations and discussed best practices. A highlight of the seminar was a discussion of Corporate Governance Codes, both national and company specific, that contribute to better transparency and disclosure. The Bulgarian Corporate Governance Code was enacted last year and applies to all companies listed in the exchange. On the basis of this code, currently a working group is engaged in drafting a National Corporate Governance Code that will apply to all companies, both listed and non-listed. The first draft of the national code will be publicly available for discussion in June.

The PFS Survey on Reporting on Corporate Social Responsibility was presented at the workshop. It is a useful tool for benchmarking that also stimulates the companies to implement high standards on Corporate Social Responsibility and other non-financial issues that are important for investors. ❖

## >> *Last MBA Volunteer Departs Bulgaria*

Megan Weber, the last of the MBA Enterprise Corps volunteers in Bulgaria through the USAID Business and Trade Development Program, completed her assignment on May 18.

Since September 2006, Megan worked with three mediation centers (the American Chamber of Commerce Mediation Center, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mediation Center; and the Stara Zagora Chamber of Commerce Mediation Center) in the areas of strategy, marketing, and new business development, with the goal of long-term sustainability. These centers are legacies of the USAID Commercial Law Reform Project, which closed last fall. Responding to the changing mediation environment in Bulgaria, Megan also supported the newly developing Professional Association of Mediators in Bulgaria (PAMB). PAMB has begun to form crucial partnerships with businesses that see the benefit of mediation and would like to help promote this form of alternative dispute resolution. While development of the field of mediation is a long-term project, progress is already showing.

In addition to her formal assignment, Megan was also significantly involved in writing for the Sofia Echo and setting up a mentoring program for Junior Achievement Bulgaria.

Originally from Southern California, Megan studied finance and international business as an undergraduate at Georgetown University, graduating with a BS in Business Administration. After completing her degree, Megan began her career as an internal consultant in the Investment Bank at JPMorgan Chase in New York City. She returned to school for her Masters in Business Administration at Cornell's Johnson Graduate School of Management, where she served as a Park Leadership Fellow. Subsequently, Megan joined the MBA Enterprise Corps as a volunteer in economic development. ❖



*Megan Weber, MBA Enterprise Corps volunteer*





## >> **USAID Media Trainings Transferred to National Institute of Justice**

The USAID Judicial Strengthening Initiative completed its transfer of the Judiciary Media Training program to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) on May 2-4 in Blagoevgrad with a joint NIJ-USAID program that the NIJ will continue into the future. The three-day training covered the principles of communication, tips for interviewing with the print and broadcast media, and intensive work in the regional center of Bulgarian National Television. The training culminated in a talk show featuring interviews with three magistrate graduates of the NIJ, which was broadcast regionally on BNT on Friday evening, and mock television interviews conducted with each training participant.



*The Bulgarian National Television regional center hosts two NIJ graduates (center and right) for a talk show as part of the USAID judiciary media training.*

The program was the latest in the series of Judiciary Media Trainings offered by USAID through the JSI and Bulgarian experts at ProMedia over the past two years. This program followed the transfer of the media skills curriculum to the NIJ earlier this year. Three NIJ staff received training preparation alongside nine recently graduated prosecutors and judges.

The trainers in Blagoevgrad included Bulgarian communication expert Prof. Evgheni Dainov of New Bulgarian University, former Radio Free Europe broadcaster and ProMedia Director Petko Georgiev, USAID JSI and CLRP Media Advisor Maria Mateva, and Court Information Officer from the Varna District Court (a USAID Model Court) Elena Bangieva. The training participants scored the program extremely high on their evaluations, with one commenting: "the only bad thing about the training is that it's over."❖

## >> **Chamber of Private Enforcement Agents Meets with Judges to Discuss Enforcement Issues**

Nearly 50 people attended a conference conducted by the Chamber of Private Enforcement Agents (local partner to USAID Commercial Law Reform Program) on May 4 in Veliko Turnovo. The conference was organized to present the new profession of private enforcement agents (PEAs) and their activities to the judiciary and to identify mechanisms to improve the enforcement process.

The Chamber of PEAs also used the occasion to announce to the judges the extension of a targeted grant by USAID, aimed at collecting written court opinions on judgment enforcement, analyzing them, and publishing a case book with commentaries on court practices in this area.

Conference participants agreed to compile a booklet with joint positions on outstanding issues. CLRP will help the Chamber to distribute the booklet to all courts and PEA offices.❖



*After heated discussions on professional topics, participants vented their creativity energy in other ways – Bogdana Jeliavska, Sofia City Court Judge, and Mariana Obretenova, member of the Chamber Council, sing for their colleagues.*